

Rgo.

LETTER

FROM A

Gentleman in the Country.

TO HIS

Friend in the CITY.

Leeds, Feb. the 2d.

I Have at last, with much Difficulty, procured you a Copy of the Character of a *Latitudinarian* Anatomiz'd, which you have so long, and with so much Importunity desired of me: All I can learn of the Paper is, that the Author Calculated it for the *Meridian* of York,

B

25

as I take it, (the Magistrate of which place in the Year 44, was a famous *Ambidexter*) and that it will equally serve for any Corporation within his Majesty's Dominions; but I will not detain you from it any longer.

A *Latitudinarian* is a walking *Amsterdam* of Religions, out of whom all the *Ancient* and *Modern Heresies* might be easily retrieved, though the Volumes of *Epiphanius* and *Ross* were lost. He thinks no part of a Church sacred but the *Weather-Cock*, and honours the Memory of him that Invented a Wind-mill, because it can *Grind* indifferently with *East*, *West*, *North* and *South*. He talks much of *Moderation*, yet is as hot as one of his own Custards, and as *Choleric* as a Hasty-pudding; he's as *Positive* in his own single Self, as an Assembly of splay-mouth'd Divines; *Geryon* and *Cerberus* were only *Types* of him, but though he has three Heads, viz. An *Independant*, a *Presbyterian*, and a *Church of England* Head, yet he has not *Brains* to furnish any one of them. By his *Wisdom* and *Gravity* one would think he had *Long Ears*, but 'tis certain he has none, for he is

is Deaf to the *Cries* of the *Poor*; and though he devours Widows and Orphans at a Morfell, yet he has no Bowels. His *Conscience* is as unaccountable as a *Modern Hypothesis*, which spares Cockle-shells in *Noah's Flood*, and dissolves the hardest *Mettals*; for it starts at an *innocent Ceremony*, when it makes nothing to digest *Perjury* and *Oppression*. 'Tis impossible to frame an *Oath*, but what he'll readily Swallow to gratify his *Ambition*. He calls them *State Coun- ters*, takes them for his Interest, and breaks them for his Convenience; he calls God to witness, and yet believes nothing of his Existence, like the Fellow in *Plautus's Amphitrio*, that Swears by *Hercules* before he was born. *Trade*, with him, is the *Law* and the *Prophets*, and, in opposition to the Text, he's resolved to serve God and *Mammon* together. Had he lived in the time of *Constantine*, he'd have gone to the *Christian Assemblies* one day to save his Bacon, and to the *Hea- then Temples* the next to secure a Stake against a *Pagan Revolution*. The Men of *Gotham* are Registered for a pack of Fools, for endeavouring to hedge in a *Cuckoo*. Is it not then a scurvy Reflection upon a

certain wise City's care for Religion; to pitch upon a Chameleon for its Head, who changes his Colour as often as he shifts his place? 'Tis pitty that our Laws, that Order so honourable a Reward for plurality of Wives, have not made the same wholesome provision against plurality of Religions. He rails at *Superstition*, and pretends to stand up for the *Primitive Church*; but though we read that the Apostles were Fishers, they were not Watermen, to look one way and row another.

He is very severe against the Bakers, and punishes them upon every Occasion; not for Cheats, for as such he honours them, but only to show his Skill in the History of the Bible, where he finds it was one of that Profession that first hanged the Gallows. He designs to adorn the Annals of his Government with something Extraordinary, and to purchase a Name as *Herostratus* did of old, by *Inflaming* the Church. *Stow* and *Hollinghead* that took such pains to describe Calves with six Legs, and all unnatural Births; if they had lived in our Age, What a strange Account would they

they have given of this Triple-headed Beast, that exceeds all the Monsters that ever were shown in *Bartholomew Fair*, that ever *Afric* or *Holland* produced?

When his Dullness is mounted on Horseback, he makes me think of some Ancient Coats of Arms, where the Supporters are of the same Species with the Beasts in the Scutcheon. If the City, to give another Instance of their Discretion, should chuse *Ball* to succeed his Master, as we find *Caligula* once design'd his Horse for the Consulship, I dare Engage for *Ball*, that he'll make the soberer Magistrate of the two; and after he has had his Belly full of Hay and Oats in the Morning, that he won't kick, and winch, and keep a pother to be carried to Brewer's Grains, and Chopt Straw, in the Afternoon.

Whatever he may be to the rest of his Servants, his Cook leads a very easy Life with him, and has as little to do all the Year round as a Barber in *Muscovy*, a Lord Treasurer in *Scotland*,

land, or a Taylor under the *Line* where they all go Naked. He preaches up Temperance at his own Table, but is *Harpy* incarnate when he can Devour on Free-cost, and hates no Sins but those that are Expensive. He shews his Charity to the Poor, by providing Prison-room for them; and for fear they should Dye of Surfeits, takes care to let them Blood with a Dog-whip.

In his own single Self, he out-does all the strange Changes in *Ovid's Metamorphosis*. *Oedipus* himself, were he alive, could never unriddle him. The Satyr that quarrel'd with the Fellow in the Fable, for blowing Hot and Cold successively with the same Breath, What would he say to our Flea-bitten Magistrate, that can do both at the same Instant? If he varied his Body, as often as his Soul tacks about, no Taylor could fit this *Posture Clark* in Religion, but he that made a Manteau for the Moon. In vain he promotes a Reformation, who ought to begin it at home, and stands up for the Sabbath, which no one profanes like himself, for he Teaches more Atheisme by his Example, than all the Parsons

Parsons in the City can ever hope to preach down. He is of several Churches, but of no Religion, as we say of Hermaphrodites, that by being of both Sexes, they are indeed of none, and can neither conveniently receive Love, as Women, nor Act it vigorously, as Men. He pretends to hate Divisions, and yet encourages Schism, which he foolishly judges to be Expedient for the State, as the Women on the other side of the *Tweed* refuse to be cured of the Itch, because, forsooth, it is wholesome.

Nebuchadnezzar's Image had a Head of Gold, and Feet of Clay. Our Idol has a Skull as soft as Pap, to a Face of Brains, and Arms of Iron. Having mention'd Brains, commend me to that *Murus Abe-neus* his Conscience, which has long since learnt the Trick *Nulla pallefcere Culpa*.

I wonder with what pretence he can punish Beggars, who is himself the most inexcusable Vagrant in the Three Kingdoms. If the *Pythagorean* System of Transmigration be true, the next remove his Soul makes must be into an Otter, or some such amphibious Animal, for one

single Element can never content him. He alters his Shapes according to the Company he is in, like those experienced Sharpers, who when they are at Court would pass for Good City Security, and when they are in the City, would be thought to have an Interest at Court. When he thinks his Authority will bear him out, *Lucifer* is less Haughty and Absolute; at other times he's as Submissive and Humble, as a *Temple-Bar* Vintner in the Long Vacation. But who would not bestow a Cudgel upon this fawning Cur, that will leap over a Stick for the Pope's Nuncio, and next minute do the same for a Crop-eared Tub-drubber?

He goes to a Sermon with the same Intent, as the Prisoners in *Ludgate* go to the Grate, only to shew his Chain; or, as the Beaux go to a Play, not to Reform his Manners, but hear himself exposed. But though he sees Hypocrisy lashed every Sunday, he stands all the Fire the Parsons flash at him, like a Managed Horse: He's convinced that 'tis a Cowardly Scoundril Sin, yet he won't part with it, because it brings him

him in Gain: As I knew a Fellow once, that had Aches all over his Body, which punctually foretold all Changes in the Weather, yet could not be perswaded to be Cured, because he would not lose his *Almanack*, as he call'd it. Had this Linsey-wolfey Brother lived under the *Mosaical* Dispensation, how finely had he been trounc'd, for ploughing thus with an Ox and an Ass, and dividing himself so nicely between a *Cassock* and a *Cloak*. He revives the Story of *Penelope*, still Unravelling what he had done before, and Unlearning under one Teacher what he Learn'd under another.

The poor Cully in *Aesop*, with his two loving Wives, one of which clear'd his Head of the Black, and the other of his Gray Hairs, till at last they left him none between them, is a true Emblem of him. The different Churches he goes to will so Weed and Purge him by degrees, that they won't leave him a Rag of Religion to cover his Nakedness. With him, as in the Creation of the World, the Evening still goes before the Morning; for though he vouchsafes

saves his Morning to the *Establiſh'd Church*, yet in his heart he's at the *Meeting*, and his Thoughts still run upon his Afternoon's *Extempore* Repast. Thus he is guilty of *Schism*, even when he seems to Assist at the publick Service; like the Man that committed *Adultery* with his own Lawful Wife, by thinking on another. I never see him at the Cathedral, but he makes me think of an *Algerine* putting out *Christian* Colours. Indeed, if the Churches were shut up, something might be said for his going to the *Barn*, for even *Horse-flesh* we know was laudable Diet at the Siege of *London-derry*. If he does it for Variety, 'tis a sign he has a most wretched Palate. Who, but a Coxcomb would go to a *Farce* in *Smith-field*, when the Play-House is open? Who, that has Din'd at *Locket's*, would afterwards Sup among Porters in a Cellar in the *Strand*?

This last place puts me in mind of his extraordinary House-keeping, though so great a Gormondizer of Spiritual Food, which costs him nothing, yet very little will content him in his own Kitchen. By the power of good management, he can
ex-

extract three Meals for himself and Family out of one single Shoulder of Mutton, which piece of Frugality he learn'd, I suppose, from the Story of the Welch Sherrieff, that converted an old Cloak first into a Coat then a Waistcoat, and last of all into a pair of Breeches. I have heard of a Gentleman, who, purely to save his Money, would take a Coach that cost him Twelve Pence to be Trimm'd by a Two-penny *French Barber in Soho*. The City perhaps, with equal Discretion, chose him to Husband their Stock; but by starving the Poor, he has put the Parishes to such Charges in Burials, that they are not like to save any thing by him; unless as old *Chiron* was, both a Tutor and a Pad-nagg upon occasion to *Achilles*, so they make the Beast serve them in a double Capacity, that is to say, both as their Horse and their Magistrate.

I have been told of a Man that had a very bad Memory, so very treacherous and unfaithful, that if he had made an Assignment in the morning, he was sure to forget it long before the hour came. Well, says he, to prevent this for the future

ture, I am resolv'd to buy a *Memorandum-Book*. But what was he the better for it? He soon after forgot that he had bought any such Director to relieve his Memory. This is the Case of our *Latitudinarian*: When those of his Party are under Hatches, then all his Discourse runs upon Christian forbearance and Condescension, and never a Passage in the Old or New Testament escapes him, that makes for that purpose. But when they are mounted, and in the Saddle, the Tables are turn'd, and he lays about him like Thunder and Lightning, and forgets that Persecution is the Mark of *Antichrist*. 'Tis true, all the while he devours you, he cants of Moderation, and pretends he does it unwillingly, but this is only a Copy of his Countenance. He first tears you asunder, as the Jews did *Isaiab* of old, with the wooden Saw of a dull heavy Speech: But who wou'd not rather chuse to make a Breakfast for a generous Lion, than to be Eaten by a weeping Crocodile?

For my part I wonder that the Priests of the different Churches he repairs to, don't execute a piece of Military Discipline

pline upon him, and truss him up for a *Spy*. But I suppose hee keeps in with all, by telling them severally in a corner that each performs best; like the Harlot, in the Play, that was kept by three Gallants, and told each of them in private, that he was the Person that gave her the most Satisfaction. 'Tis next to a miracle to me, that the Priesthood, who are so sharp-sighted upon other Occasions, don't see through the thin Artifices of this bare-fac'd Impostor, and dart the Thunder of the Church upon a Wretch who pretends to be a Friend to all, and yet is an Enemy to the whole Tribe. I hope none of the Prophets have given it him under their hands, that 'tis no Sin to go to the Temple of *Rimmon*. But this present Contending between the several Perswasions to secure him to their Party, gives me a perfect Resemblance of an *Ant-hill*, where there is the same lugging, and teating, and struggling about a dead Fly.

In short, our *Latitudinarian* is a Retainer to all Churches, but a Member of none; and will never have the Benefit of his Clergy, though he pretends to make

make his Court to all the various Sorts of them. 'Tis an unthinking Sot, that keeps the Streets cleaner than his own Conscience. At last, every Body finds out his Disguise, and despises him; and as several Cities formerly contend-
ed who gave Birth to *Homer*, so, in his case, all *Churches* and *Congregations* strive who shall Disclaim him first. Though he has a middle Station here, he must not expect one in another World. *Lucifer* only can pay him the Wages of his Hypocrisy, in whose Clutches we leave him.

Your most humble Servant,

H. E.

P O S T S C R I P T.

I Am informed that Dr. Otes has been very prolific of late, pray send me down all his Books by the Carrier, for I long to be opening his Magazine of Scandal.

Scandal. An honest Parson in the Neighbourhood calls him *Orestes*, because he's *Scriptus & in tergo, nec dum finitus*. Another applies this passage of *Horace* to him, *Ubi quid datur OT I illudo*, which he Interprets thus, *When any thing of Dr. Otes's Writing comes abroad, I fall a Laughing, and make my Self merry with it.*

F I N I S.

Scandal. An honest Parson in the Neigh-
 bourhood calls him a scoundrel, because he's
 a scoundrel in his way of living. And
 then applies this passage of Horace to
 him. *Et si quis dicitur O. I. A. I. A.* which
 he interprets thus. When any thing of
 Dr. Ood's Writing comes abroad, I shall
 laugh, and make my self merry with it.

F. I. V. I. S.